

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A screening method for active ingredients which exhibit effects of ameliorating pruritus, rough skin or sensitive skin, or effects of skin whitening, by inhibiting production and/or release of stem cell factor (hereinafter, SCF), the method being characterized by comprising the steps of contacting ~~SCF-expressing cells~~ epidermal keratinocytes with test ingredients, assaying the amount of SCF produced and/or released by said cells, and selecting test ingredients which reduce the amount of production and/or release of SCF as said active ingredients, wherein said SCF-expressing cells are subjected to stimulation to promote SCF production and/or release.

2. (original) The screening method according to claim 1, wherein said stimulation is drying stimulation, ultraviolet irradiation stimulation or chemical stimulation.

3. (previously presented) The screening method according to claim 1, wherein said SCF-expressing cells are contacted with said test ingredients, after which said cells are subjected to stimulation, and then the amount of SCF produced and/or released by said cells

is assayed to select said active ingredients.

4. (withdrawn) A skin external preparation which inhibits SCF production and/or release, which comprises one or more ingredients selected from the group consisting of rose extract rose water, camellia sinensis leaf extract, hops extract, hawthorn extract, adzuki bean powder, white birch extract, cinnamon extract, clove extract, arnica extract, peony extract, lime, chlorella extract, Roman chamomile extract, black tea extract, eucalyptus extract, powdered cang zhu extract, powdered bai zhu extract, powdered oolong tea extract, restharrow extract, uncaria gambir extract, grape leaf extract, saposhnikovia root extract, mulberry bark extract, parietaria extract, benzoin extract, stevia extract, cypress extract, calamus extract, soybean extract, Chinese cat's claw extract, soapwort extract, althaea extract, otogiriso (*Hypericum erectum*) extract and artemisia extract.

5. (withdrawn) A skin external preparation for pruritus which comprises an ingredient which inhibits production and/or release of SCF as a pruritus-ameliorating active ingredient.

6. (withdrawn) The skin external preparation for pruritus according to claim 5, wherein said pruritus-ameliorating active ingredient includes at least one selected from the group consisting of hops extract, hawthorn extract, adzuki bean powder,

clove extract, Roman chamomile extract, black tea extract, eucalyptus extract, powdered cang zhu extract, powdered bai zhu extract, powdered oolong tea extract, restharrow extract, saposhnikovia root extract, parietaria extract, benzoin extract, stevia extract, calamus extract, Chinese cat's claw extract, soapwort extract, althaea extract, and otogiriso (*Hypericum erectum*) extract.

7. (withdrawn) A skin external preparation for rough skin prevention which comprises an ingredient which inhibits production and/or release of SCF as a rough skin-preventing active ingredient.

8. (withdrawn) The skin external preparation for rough skin prevention according to claim 7, wherein said rough skin-preventing active ingredient includes at least one selected from the group consisting of hawthorn extract, powdered cang zhu extract, powdered bai zhu extract, restharrow extract, mulberry bark extract, parietaria extract, benzoin extract, stevia extract, cypress extract, calamus extract, Chinese cat's claw extract, soapwort extract, and althaea extract.

9. (withdrawn) A skin external preparation for sensitive skin which comprises an ingredient which inhibits production and/or release of SCF as a sensitive skin-ameliorating active ingredient.

10. (withdrawn) The skin external preparation for sensitive skin according to claim 9, wherein said sensitive skin-ameliorating active ingredient includes at least one selected from the group consisting of rose extract rose water, camellia sinensis leaf extract, hops extract, hawthorn extract, adzuki bean powder, white birch extract, cinnamon extract, clove extract, chlorella extract, black tea extract, eucalyptus extract, powdered cang zhu extract, powdered bai zhu extract, powdered oolong tea extract, restharrow extract, uncaria gambir extract, grape leaf extract, saposchnikovia root extract, mulberry bark extract, parietaria extract, benzoin extract, stevia extract, cypress extract, calamus extract, soybean extract, Chinese cat's claw extract, soapwort extract, althaea extract, otogiriso (*Hypericum erectum*) extract and artemisia extract.

11. (withdrawn) A skin external preparation for skin whitening which comprises an ingredient which inhibits production and/or release of SCF as a skin whitening active ingredient.

12. (withdrawn) The skin external preparation for skin whitening according to claim 11, wherein said skin whitening active ingredient includes one or more selected from the group consisting of rose extract rose water, restharrow extract, uncaria gambir extract, parietaria extract, benzoin extract, soapwort extract,

chlorella extract and eucalyptus extract.

13. (withdrawn) A method for ameliorating pruritus, rough skin or sensitive skin or whitening skin, which comprises applying human or mammalian epidermis with an active ingredient which exhibits an effect of ameliorating pruritus, rough skin or sensitive skin, or an effect of skin whitening, by inhibiting production and/or release of SCF.

14. (withdrawn) A medicament comprising an ingredient which inhibits SCF expressed inside or on the cell membranes of cornified cells in response to ultraviolet ray stimulation.

15. (withdrawn) The medicament according to claim 14, wherein said ingredient is at least one selected from the group consisting of rose extract, rose water, camellia sinensis leaf extract, hops extract, hawthorn extract, adzuki bean powder, white birch extract, cinnamon extract, clove extract, arnica extract, peony extract, lime, chlorella extract, Roman chamomile extract, black tea extract, eucalyptus extract, powdered cang zhu extract, powdered bai zhu extract, powdered oolong tea extract, restharrow extract, uncaria gambir extract, grape leaf extract, saposnikovia root extract, mulberry bark extract, parietaria extract, benzoin extract, stevia extract, cypress extract, calamus extract, soybean extract, Chinese cat's claw extract, soapwort extract, althaea

extract, otogiriso (*Hypericum erectum*) extract and artemisia extract.

16. (withdrawn) The medicament according to claim 14, wherein the ingredient is adzuki bean powder, arnica extract, restharrow extract or benzoin extract.

17. (currently amended) The screening method according to claim 2, wherein said ~~SCF-expressing cells~~ epidermal keratinocytes are contacted with said test ingredients, after which said cells are subjected to stimulation, and then the amount of SCF produced and/or released by said cells is assayed to select said active ingredients.